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SUMMARY OF THE DRAFT

# WILDERNESS Management Plan

## BISTI WILDERNESS NEW MEXICO



Bureau of Land Management  
Department of the Interior



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S U M M A R Y

Draft Bisti Management Plan

February, 1986

This document is a summary of a Draft Wilderness Management Plan for the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Bisti Wilderness located in northwestern New Mexico. The purpose of this summary is to provide the public with an overview to how the BLM is proposing to manage the resources and uses of the Bisti Wilderness.

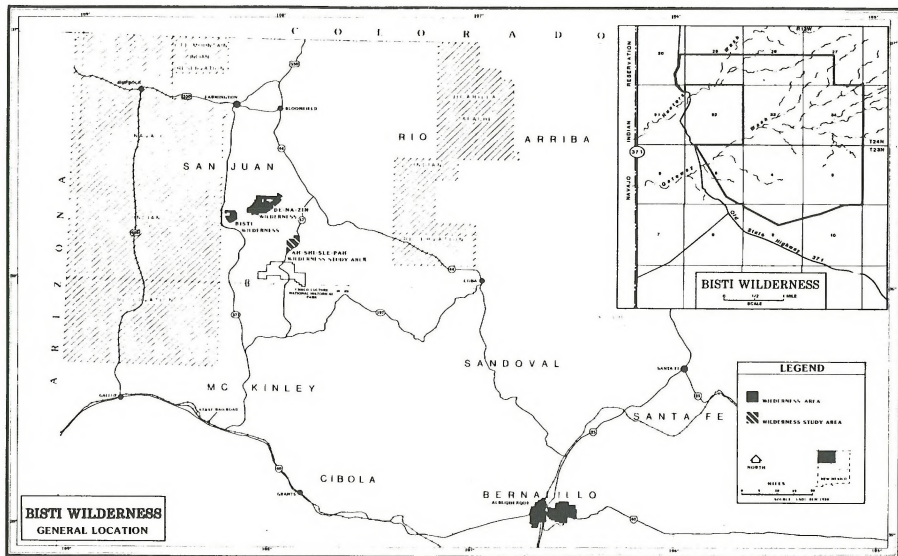
The Draft Bisti Wilderness Management Plan will be available for your inspection in New Mexico at public libraries in Gallup and Farmington at university libraries in Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Las Vegas, Portales and Silver City; and at the New Mexico State Library in Santa Fe. The Draft Management Plan will also be available for review at BLM offices in New Mexico and at the scheduled public meetings. The BLM has scheduled two public meetings to explain the plan and to accept written and oral comments: March 11, 1986, at the Farmington Civic Center from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. and March 17, 1986, at the Albuquerque Convention Center from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

If you are unable to attend the scheduled meetings, please mail your comments to us. In order to be used in developing the Final Management Plan, all comments must be received by April 7, 1986. Written comments or requests for copies of the Draft Bisti Wilderness Management Plan should be sent to: Farmington Resource Area Office, Bureau of Land Management, La Plata Highway, Caller Service 4104, Farmington, NM 87499-4104.

L. Paul Applegate  
L. Paul Applegate, District Manager

2-7-86 Date

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WHAT IS THE BISTI  
WILDERNESS AREA?

The Bisti Wilderness is located in northwestern New Mexico, San Juan County, in an area commonly referred to as the San Juan Basin (refer to map). Designated by Congress in October of 1984, the area covers 3,968 acres of Federal land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

One of the primary attractions of the wilderness is the high scenic values resulting from the unusual geologic formations such as toadstools, hoodoos and spires (refer to cover photo). These have been created by the weathering of interbedded shales, sandstone and coal with occasional caps of shale, sandstone or iron concretions. These formations occur in uncommon concentrations within the Bisti Wilderness. The badlands also display dinosaur, plant, mammal and other reptilian fossils and, petrified logs of which some are exposed on the surface.

WHAT IS THE BISTI WILDERNESS  
MANAGEMENT PLAN?

The Management Plan establishes clear written management objectives and policies that function as a road map to guide future action in this area. The Plan also identifies a sequence for specific action items aimed at achieving goals and objectives that comply with the intentions of the governing legislation.

The Management Plan is designed to cover a 10-year period. It will be evaluated and revised as necessary at least every 5 years or as directed by significant changes in

resource conditions or national direction.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF BLM  
ADMINISTERED WILDERNESS AREAS?

1. To provide for the long-term protection and preservation of the area's wilderness character under a principle of nondegradation.
2. To manage the wilderness area for the use and enjoyment of visitors in a manner that will leave the area unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness.
3. To manage the area using the minimum tool, equipment, or structure necessary to successfully, safely, and economically accomplish the objective.
4. To manage nonconforming but accepted uses permitted by the Wilderness Act and subsequent laws in a manner that will prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the area's wilderness character.

WHAT SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT  
POLICIES AND ACTIONS ARE  
PRESCRIBED IN THE PLAN?

Administration - The BLM will continue its patrol efforts using BLM personnel and volunteers to preserve and protect wilderness resources. The administrative use of motorized vehicles within the wilderness will be prohibited except if justified for fire suppression, search and rescue, and in emergencies that require protecting the wilderness resource.

Information and Education - The BLM will make General information about the Bisti Wilderness available to the public without advertising or

promoting the use of the area. The BLM will educate and inform the general public and users of the area about specific resources that require special consideration due to fragile or endangered resources, seasonal, ecological, life cycle and environmental changes.

Cultural Resource Management -

Cultural resources within the wilderness will be subject to the forces of nature. Study and management of such resource will not normally include excavation, stabilization, or interpretive activities. Case-by-case exceptions may be authorized by the BLM State Director in New Mexico. Existing sites will not be marked or identified for the public, but will be patrolled and monitored by the BLM. Collection by Native Americans of renewable resources such as plants and fruits and nonrenewable colored sands for ceremonial and medicinal purposes will be allowed to continue under nonmotorized/nonmechanical means.

Livestock Management - Authorized livestock grazing shall be permitted to continue at its current level. No curtailment of grazing permits shall occur simply because of wilderness designation. Any adjustment to the current grazing levels will be examined through rangeland studies.

Additional range sites (minimum of one per Range Unit) will be selected during 1986 to assist in monitoring vegetation condition and trend.

Any use of motorized vehicles or mechanical equipment for maintenance of range improvements will be analyzed through an environmental assessment. Written permission from the BLM will be

required prior to using any motorized vehicles or mechanical equipment within the wilderness.

The administration of grazing use in the wilderness is controlled by the Bureau of Indian Affairs Eastern Navajo Agency through cooperative agreements with the BLM. Procedures will be initiated in 1988, after completion of the Resource Management Plan for the Farmington Resource Area, to return full administrative responsibility for grazing to the BLM.

Sheep-proof fences with gates will be constructed on the northwest exterior boundary and along the southern exterior boundary of the Bisti Wilderness. This will aid in the management of authorized livestock grazing in the wilderness.

Mineral Resources Management - The Bisti Wilderness was withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the mining laws and all laws pertaining to mineral leasing at the time of designation. Prior to the designation of the area as wilderness, four oil and gas leases had been issued. The last of the four leases will expire in 1989. Until that time lease development will be controlled to protect wilderness values.

Naturalness - The BLM will continue its efforts to remove intrusions such as car bodies, litter, a fence, old vehicle routes, and a powerline which existed at the time of wilderness designation. Efforts have already been undertaken to remove the abandoned powerline in the northwest corner of the wilderness area and to rehabilitate a vehicle route. Fences or other barriers will be erected along the southwestern and northwestern boundaries of the wilderness to



control vehicular access.

The BLM has proposed a boundary adjustment to resolve an occupancy situation, and associated structures and vehicle use on the southern boundary of the Bisti Wilderness. This boundary adjustment, which will require Congressional action, would remove approximately 170 acres from the Bisti Wilderness. Until the situation is resolved, the occupant will be authorized to use motor vehicles on approximately 100 yards of a vehicular route from the dwelling south to the wilderness boundary.

Paleontological Resources Management - Paleontological resources will be subject to natural ecological processes. Stabilization, collection of materials, excavation, or interpretive activities involving paleontological resources will only occur when prior written authorization has been granted.

Each permit application that involves salvaging a paleontological site will be reviewed by an advisory committee (formed by the BLM) and will be analyzed through an environmental assessment. All activities of this nature must have the prior approval of the New Mexico BLM State Director. Any fossil material removed from the wilderness will be repositied in an institution within the State of New Mexico.

Inventory will be permitted as necessary to record, evaluate, and document site conditions.

Recreation Management - The BLM will develop a parking and interpretive area on the west side of the wilderness south of the Gateway Mine. Interpretive signs

and brochures will be prepared to aid in the management of visitor use. The parking facility and all signs will be located outside of the wilderness area. There will be no restrooms or developments for potable water.

A self-issue registration system will be implemented in 1988 to assist in the collection of visitor use data. Hobby collecting of non-fossil mineral specimens will be discouraged through educational efforts.

The recreational use of motorized vehicles or other forms of mechanical transportation within the Bisti Wilderness is prohibited.

Wildlife Management - Relatively few wildlife species are found in the Bisti Wilderness. Of prime importance is the continued success of nesting raptors. Annual monitoring of raptor nesting territories by nonmotorized/nonmechanical means will continue. Information and education activities will be undertaken to address the sensitive issues of nesting raptors. If monitoring is conclusive that increasing visitor use is having a detrimental effect on nesting success, restrictions on visitor access may be imposed.

HOW WILL THE BLM MONITOR THE  
IMPACTS OF EXISTING  
AND FUTURE USES WITHIN THE  
WILDERNESS?

The Management Plan calls for the establishment of "Limits of Acceptable Change" for rangeland condition and trend, air quality, wildlife, and visual resources. These standards will become the basis of monitoring programs to help the BLM evaluate and measure changes in the resource condition over time. This information will help

the BLM to modify and adjust the Management Plan and specific management as necessary.

WHEN WILL THE DRAFT WILDERNESS  
MANAGEMENT PLAN TAKE EFFECT?

The Draft Bisti Wilderness Management Plan is open for public review and comment until April 7, 1986. After all comments are analyzed a Final Management Plan will be prepared and implementation will begin. The Final Management Plan is to be completed by September 1986. The BLM Wilderness Management Policy will guide the day-to-day management of the Bisti Wilderness until the Management Plan is finalized.

HOW CAN I MAKE  
MY COMMENTS KNOWN?

This version is intended only to summarize the primary thrusts of the planning policies and management actions. You must refer to the complete Draft Bisti Wilderness Management Plan to learn of all the management actions and policy recommendations, the specific wording and the rationale behind them.

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